TL1465

DÁIL ÉIREANN
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH, 2.
(Dublin, 2).

8th. July, 1992.

Tom Hyland,
East Timor Campaign,
210 Nathaniel Road,
Ballyfermot,
Dublin 10.

Dear Tom,

Herewith the reply to the P.Q. which both I and Michael D. tabled on arms supplies which I hope is of some interest to you.

As you will be aware, the Dail is rising on this Friday and will not be resuming until early October, as far as I am aware.

However, if there is anything that I can do in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

ROGER GARLAND, T.D.

Tom Hyland

QUESTIONS NO. 34 AND 75

To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs if his attention has been drawn to the fact that there is a proposed sale from British Aerospace to Indonesia of 40 Hawk Fighter Trainer Aircraft for a consideration of £600m; and whether he is going to make representations, particularly in light of Indonesia's action against East Timor's independence campaign and in view of their record of serious human rights abuses including genocide.

- Roger Garland.

To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs if he will outline the Irish Government's position in general towards arms sales by members of the European Community to zones of conflict outside the Community; and if, in particular, the Irish Government will be expressing an opinion within the context of the European Community on the sale by the United Kingdom of 40 Hawk Fighter Trainer Aircraft BAE to the Indonesian Government.

- Michael D. Higgins

For ORAL answer on Tuesday 7th July, 1992.

Reply

With your permission, a Cheann Chomhairle, I propose to take Questions No. 34 and No. 75 together.

Ireland is not a producer of arms but we have always advocated restraint in arms sales in the interests of international peace and stability.

In its Declaration on Non-Proliferation and Arms Exports of 29 June last year, the European Council identified a number of common criteria on which the national arms export policies of EC member States were based. Ireland fully supports these criteria which are in line with our national policy. These criteria are :

- respect for the international commitments of the Member States of the Community, in particular the sanctions decreed by the Security Council of the United Nations and those decreed by the Community, agreements on non-proliferation and other subjects, as well as other international obligations;

- the respect of Human Rights in the country of final destination;

- the internal situation in the country of final destination, as a function of the existence of tensions or internal armed conflict;

- the preservation of regional peace, security and stability;

- the national security of the Member States and of territories whose external relations are the responsibility of a Member State, as well as that of friendly and Allied countries;

- the behaviour of the buyer country with regard to the International Community, as regards in particular its attitude to terrorism, the nature of its Alliances, and respect for International Law;

- the existence of a risk that the equipment will be diverted within the buyer country or re-exported under undesirable conditions.

An eighth criterion relating to the technical and economic capacity of the importing countries to absorb the arms in question was adopted by the European Council in Lisbon on 26 and 27 June.

These criteria represent the first step in a process of developing a common policy among the Twelve towards arms exports as part of a broader policy of non-proliferation. For the present, it is a matter for each Member State to interpret and apply the common criteria on a national basis.

I am aware of reports of a proposed sale to Indonesia of up to 40 Hawk Fighter Trainer Aircraft by a British firm. It is a matter for the UK Government to ensure that the common criteria are respected in their national practices.

With regard to the human rights situation, Ireland and our Community partners have issued a number of statements over the past year condemning the serious human rights abuses that have taken place in East Timor. The Indonesian Government can be in no doubt as to how seriously we, and our Community partners, view the violation of human rights.